

Message Text

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E.O. 11652: N/A

SUBJ: CURRENT MEDIA REACTION

IN AN EDITORIAL ENTITLED "KISSINGER-GROMYKO TALKS", TIMES OF
MALTA (CONSERVATIVE) OF FEBRUARY 18 COMMENTS:

"DR. HENRY KISSINGER, UNITED STATES SECRETARY OF STATE, AND MR.
ANDREI GROMYKO, SOVIET FOREIGN MINISTER, MEETING IN GENEVA, HAVE
DISCUSSED THE SITUATION IN THE MIDDLE EAST IN AN ATTEMPT TO
RECONCILE THEIR VIEWS ON THE BEST WAY OF BRINGING ABOUT A FULL
AND SPEEDY SOLUTION TO THE PROBLEM. BOTH STATESMEN HAVE SAID
THAT THE PROBLEMS IN THE AREA WERE RECONCILABLE. THEY WERE
SPEAKING FROM FIRST-HAND KNOWLEDGE, HAVING MET ARAB AND ISRAELI
LEADERS.

MR. GROMYKO HAS REITERATED THE NEED FOR AN EARLY RECONVENING OF
THE GENEVA PEACE CONFERENCE WHICH HAS MET ONLY ONCE IN 15 MONTHS.
DR. KISSINGER ON THE OTHER HAND, FAVORS A STEP-BY-STEP ISRAELI
WITHDRAWAL FROM OCCUPIED AREAS IN THE SINAI DESERT, THE GOLAN
HEIGHTS AND THE WEST BANK OF THE RIVER JORDAN. THIS VIEW IS,
TO A LARGE EXTENT, SHARED BY PRESIDENT SADAT OF EGYPT, BUT NOT
BY PRESIDENT ASSAD OF SYRIA WHO, SINCE THE OCTOBER 1973 WAR,
HAS BECOME THE STAUNCHEST ARAB ALLY OF THE SOVIET UNION.

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AN OVERWHELMING DESIRE FOR A SPEEDY SOLUTION TO THE MIDDLE EAST

ISSUE IS CLEAR. THERE IS MUCH TO COMMEND A CAUTIOUS BUT SECURE
STEP-BY-STEP AGREEMENT, CONSIDERING THE MANY-SIDED OPINIONS
WITHIN THE ARAB COUNTRIES AND THE ISRAELI OBJECTIVE OF SECURING
THE COUNTRY'S TERRITORIAL INTEGRITY THROUGH WELL DEFINED BORDERS."
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